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## Duxbury Woodland Trails Beckon Nature Lovers

By The REV. CANON ROBERT MERRY

Duxbury is in the process of restoration and renewal. We almost lost our beach and the Coast Guard let us rebuild Bug Light. After 30 years of patient work, John Nash and many helpers from the Beach Committee and the Reservation set in place an "equal access" ramp to the beach for the elderly and handicapped.

Little has been shouted about the renovation of our woodlands and the setting up of hiking trails (no motor bikers please), but thanks to the work of David Clapp, of Audubon, and Joe Grady, of the town's Conservation Commission, plus the energy and imagination of John Joline and a host of helpers, we now have in place a system of trails through our woodlands that will challenge the mettle of even the youngest among us as well as the elderly. The present writer, who just finished a 2-mile walk, boasts a proud 88 years of life. In what follows, I will describe a few of these trails, their merits and their demerits in hopes some *Clipper* readers will be motivated to grab a walking stick and set out.

Let us begin with an easy trail — that of the North Hill Marsh. This can begin at the large parking lot off Mayflower St. on the right. The trail leads to a turn to the right and to the observation deck above the marsh (built by Joe Grady and David Clapp) where varied kinds of water and other fowl can be seen.

The yellow markers lead back to Mayflower St. and the starting point with a couple of detours on the left on the way if desired. They give great views.

Another trail begins at the small parking lot just beyond this one on the left, and leads with up and downs to the Round Pond spot where the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society held its first clam chowder supper after clamming. This is an 11-acre property including the pond as part of its rural holdings. Here one can continue on an easy trail around the pond to join another trail (marked in red) that began back up this trail and goes down a hill where a rest bench was set up by John Joline and Joe Grady for weary feet.

Back of us at this point, is Richard Loring's cranberry bog and circumventing this at last we come to Pine Lake and the Southeast expressway. This completes the North Hill and Round Pond trails. They are fun to traverse and rest spots are handy.

Another trail more strenuous than the Round Pond and North Hill trails begins at the end of Harrison St. (parking is available as well). It goes straight up the hill past the 1937 granite slab marker, noting the site of an early school. The trail skirts a cul de sac and proceeds several yards on the level and continues on past a cranberry bog in complete forest cover. My wife Harriet and I trailed this area until we thought we were lost. Sounds of an axe chopping wood rescued us and following this we came upon a clearing and a cottage and vigorous man who welcomed us and explained that we were only a 5-minute hike to Rte. 53 at Osborn's store.

"Aren't you a little weary after all this woodland hiking?" he asked. "Why not hop into my car and I'll

taxi you out to where your trail began." We were glad indeed to get a lift and that ended our hiking day.

Another series of trails cuts into thick woods and a swampy area just off Franklin St. at the crossing of Union Bridge Rd. It is very smooth walking on a thick bed of pine needles. The trail leads to a series of Trout Farm ponds and is very practical for winter hiking and even cross country skiing.

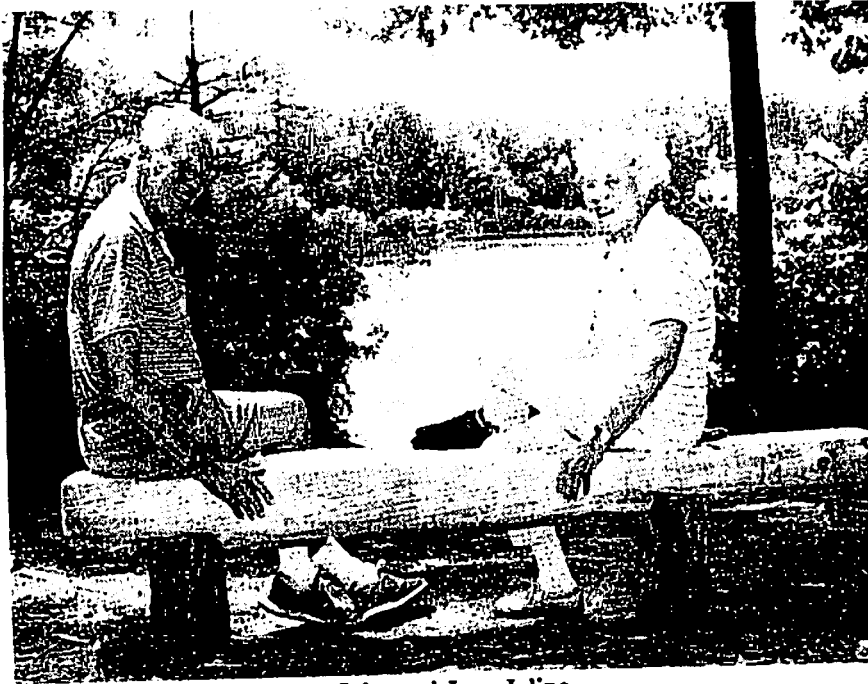
I walked in stepping over the cable that keeps motor bikes and other vehicles out, and when I reached the turn which would lead me back to the highway, I turned around and observed that lovely sylvan scene — the tall pines, the blue sky full of scattered cumulus clouds, I was quite enthralled. One can see where our ship builders got their masts for their ships in Duxbury's heyday of ship building from 1800-1870.

Another very practical system of trails is located off River Rd. in a joint recreation area Duxbury shares with Kingston. The town bought this area for open space and recreational use when it was discovered that the land was so waterlogged it would be next to impossible to erect a building on it. I think this is the most popular open field area in town. I have been there many times and never without people walking their dogs or just walking.

The first trail in this Bay Farm system leads directly off the parking lot and goes straight to the waters of Kingston Bay where a landing of gigantic rocks furnishes a place to rest and watch the sailboats in the Bay and Bug Light.

Another trail leads off to the right from this central one and threading its way through Kingston's cedar trees ends at a hospitable bench. Regrettably poison ivy and tons of broken glass on the shore below the path warn the traveller to watch his or her steps; but the water view at high tides is wonderful.

There are several unmarked trails in northwest Duxbury and John Joline and Joe Grady have traversed them all. One that I love is called "Whiton Woods" and begins around number 700 on Temple St. and proceeds beside feeder ponds to my brother Stan's cranberry bogs and ends beyond the Marshfield line. A brief path at this point carries us to a return route to Temple St.



John and Jean Joline



Peter Buttkus and Joe Grady



Boulder at Camp Wing noting the donor Daniel Wing. The Rev. Canon Merry and "Wendy" in foreground.

A scant few yards from this spot takes us to Camp Wing and the largest non-residential and untaxable land in town and marks a fitting close to these excursions.

It is said that walking in moderation is the best exercise, especially for the elderly and here I would second this advice. There are a few essential items for this form of recreation. First as one encounters roots and rolling rocks, a walking stick is advisable. It must be long enough to reach one's feet and strong enough to hold one's weight if a fall should occur. Second, in summer, anti-bug spray is a must. And third if one's interests include bird sightings a low-caliber pair of binoculars is helpful. I recommend "low-key" because stronger glasses make sighting difficult as birds fly faster than we can focus the lenses.

Duxbury is unique in many respects — its abundant historic spots, its bay and beach and now as I have spelled out an abundance of nature trails. My wife Harriet and I have covered most of them many times in hopes these few paragraphs will motivate many to follow in our steps.